

Philippians 2:3-11

“The Humility of Christ”

Scripture: Philippians 2:3-11

Memory Verse: Matthew 21:5 “...Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly and sitting on a donkey...”

Lesson Focus: As we begin Passion Week and start to contemplate the work of Christ on the cross, it’s helpful for us to remember the majesty of King Jesus humbly submitting Himself to the will of the Father. Scripture exhorts us to have the same mind that was in Christ (Phil 2:5), one of humility. In this study, we are going to focus on one of the chief characteristics of Christianity. We will ask what true humility is, what it looks like as modeled out in the life and death of Jesus, and how we too can say, “*not my will but your will be done.*”

Activities and Crafts: Jesus’s Triumphal Entry coloring picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson.

Activity for 1st/2nd graders: Decorating Palm Branches

Starter Activity: “Tic Tac Toe Challenge”

Begin the lesson, challenging the kids to a few rounds of Tic-Tac-Toe on the white board. This will get the kids thinking about the dangers of pride and also illustrating painful humility.

Teachers: Consider bragging about how great you are at Tic-Tac-Toe. Really put on a show and about how you cannot be beat. Ask for a few volunteers to challenge you and win or tie the first couple of times...continuing to boast. But then make sure you lose on the last round and put on a show at how “crushed” you are at losing!

The Lord, out of His love for us, will sometimes bring humility into our lives (Proverbs 16:18, etc.) We often forget how little we really are in the face of the Almighty God. That we really are completely dependent on Him.

As we look at the life of Jesus, God in the flesh, we see true humility. He has every reason to boast. He never sinned. He is the Creator and all-powerful. And yet, this week specifically, we see the servant nature of Christ and His humility. We see Him lowering Himself, to serve and bless others. Let’s open our Bibles to see if we can’t study Christ’s humility and learn how to apply that to our own lives.

Bible Study: We are going to be studying Philippians Chapter 2. But we will be jumping around a little bit as we study this text, particularly looking at the Passion week as detailed in the Gospels, and how Christ demonstrated what Paul teaches us here.

Intro: Paul is actually writing this letter from prison. He had been thrown in jail because he told people about Jesus, that He was the Son of God, that He died for their sins and was resurrected. And that He is now Lord, He is King and we should obey Him. And that made some people, who were still in charge upset and they often persecuted Christians. So, while Paul is writing this from prison he's actually rejoicing that those he's writing this letter to believe in God. And he's so thankful and happy about their faith that he is now going to encourage them in their difficult circumstances. He wants them to continue loving and loving others.

Philippians 2:3-4: This is a really difficult thing to do sometimes isn't it? Being selfish is, sort of, what humans do. We think about ourselves a lot. What would be best for me? How does this impact me? Is this something that I want to do? And that's sort of how we live our lives. But Paul challenges us here. He tells us to count others more significant than ourselves. That's what true humility means. The Bible actually defines it for us.

Q: Anybody ever used to watch Winnie the Pooh? Or have any little brothers and sisters that do?

Remember Eeyore! "Poor me." He would often put himself down. That's not humility. That's actually a fake humility. That's actually still a self-centered attitude, always focusing on yourself. Instead humility is just thinking about others and being genuinely concerned about their well-being. **Lowering** the importance of your own needs so that you can see the needs of others. (**Teachers:** Consider playing a game of "limbo" with the kids and see how "low" they can go to reinforce this point!)

Philippians 2:5: Now Paul tells us to have the same mind that Christ did. To imitate His humility. As Christians we are called to walk according to the faith that is in us. To be like Christ. That's what being a Christian means. It was actually a word that the Romans used to make fun of followers of Jesus, that meant, "little Christ's." We should be a bunch of little Christ's running around sharing the good news of the Kingdom. (**Teachers:** Consider playing a short game of Simon Says to demonstrate imitation)

Philippians 2:6-7: What a beautiful expression of humility. It's almost unthinkable how glorious this is. That although He being God, lowered Himself. Took on the nature of a bondservant, a willing slave, and came in the likeness of men. It's hard to even begin to try and wrap our heads around what this means. How could this be? (**Teachers:** To help the kids better understand these verses consider telling the kids a story about a king who willingly left his throne to serve and die for his subjects. See paragraphs on the last page as an example. Be sure to explain this is only a story and doesn't fully explain the wonder of what Jesus, the Son of God, did for us!)

That's sort of like what Christ did for us, but even then, that falls short in trying to explain what Paul describes here. To think of the God of all the universe lowering Himself to take on the likeness of man. He's so much higher than us.

But this is the God we serve. This is the demonstration of His love towards you and me. That He is God, wonderful and mighty, beautiful beyond our comprehension and because of our great need to be cleansed, to be redeemed, He lowered Himself to the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:8: *“He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.”*

Q: Does anybody know what next Sunday is?

A: Easter... Resurrection Sunday!

Q: How about next Friday? A: Good Friday where Jesus died on the cross!

The cross is the defining moment in all of history, when Jesus offered up Himself to save us from our sins. And you can understand why the disciples spent so much time emphasizing it.

Think about this: Jesus was about 30 years old when he started His ministry, and He went around teaching and healing people, proclaiming the Kingdom of God, for about 3 ½ years. But the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, devote over a ⅓ of everything they wrote to just one week of Jesus' life. Imagine if someone wrote a biography about you and almost half of what they wrote was only about what you did this last week! Well, it is in this final week of Jesus's life where we see the depth of His humility.

Q: Does anybody know what we call that week?

A: Passion Week! We kick it off this weekend with what is known as the triumphal entry or Palm Sunday.

Q: Anybody know what this is? The triumphal entry?

A: Jesus had been preparing His disciples for quite a while to go to Jerusalem, which was like the capital city of Israel. It's where the temple was located, so it was a big deal. Jesus knew He was going to die there soon. But as He was preparing to enter the city, to which He was going to die, He did so on the back of a.....donkey!

And all the people, His disciples, those who had heard about Jesus, began to worship and celebrate His coming to Jerusalem. They laid branches down before Him and their cloaks. They shouted, *“Hosanna! Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is the King, The Son of David! Who comes in the name of the Lord!”* **(Matthew 21:9)** This made the Pharisees mad and they instructed Jesus to quiet the crowd, to stop them from praising Jesus. And Jesus' response is so cool. He just said, *“I tell you if they were silent, the rocks would cry out.”* **(Luke 19:40)**

Jesus is God. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. And here He is, riding on the back of a donkey, not some majestic powerful horse, or whatever other animal you could think of worthy of a king. He's riding on the back of a donkey. A service animal. An animal that has a job to do. *"Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey..."* (Matthew 21:5)

Christ had a job to do. He was going to offer up Himself as a sacrifice. To take our place. He was going to be obedient even to the point of death. The most humiliating death you could think of during that time. And even before His death, Christ spent much of His final week, humbly serving others. He taught people in the temple and even washed His disciples' stinky feet!

Philippians 2:9-11: He is above every other name, everything in the universe. Every knee will bow and every tongue confess He is Lord. (**Teachers:** Consider having all of the kids kneel with you)

Q: What is significant about this posture?

A: It's a position of surrender. It's acknowledging that God is who He says He is.

He is Lord. He is our master. But He is also good. And He is worthy of our surrender because He loves us and died for us.

Key Point: Paul tells us that we are to have the same mind that was in Christ Jesus. That of humility. There are a number of examples that we could point to and look at in the life of Christ, but none more than the cross. He was obedient unto death.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, the night before His death. He was in agony, praying *"Father, please let this cup pass from me."* (Matthew 26:39a) He knew the horror of what was to come. But then He said something powerful. *"Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."* (Matthew 26:39b)

This is the mind of Christ. This is what Paul is instructing us to do... Not my will, Lord but yours be done. Make that the slogan of your life. Life is less about what I want or how this helps me, or benefits me, but asking, "how can I bless someone else?" "How can I imitate my Savior?" "How can I use what God has blessed me with to bless others?"

Story of a King Who Left His Throne

Imagine a glorious and powerful King. He's beyond rich. In His kingdom, there is no need. It's a really wonderful and beautiful place. But on the far reaches of the kingdom, there is a community of really poor people. These people are often clothed in rags, they don't have much in way of belongings. And not only are they poor, but they are also actually a violent people. They treat each other extremely badly. They steal. They yell at each other and try to rule over one another.

But this King, instead of rightly judging them, had compassion on these people. And He actually left His throne, He left the comforts of His beautiful kingdom, and all of His armies and guards, to go live among these really mean people. He became poor and lived with them. He showed them grace, something they didn't deserve. And eventually, in the time of need, this King actually gave Himself up and died for these people to give them the opportunity to know what it's like to live in His beautiful Kingdom.